

Washington, DC -- U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) praised Cortland Downtown Partnership for securing a \$50,250 National Park Service Preserve America Grant to maintain Cortland's historical downtown, which was awarded during a ceremony at the U.S. Capitol complex earlier today.

"It is wonderful to see representatives from local communities visit Washington, D.C., especially when they are recognized for the hard work and dedication of a community committed to preserving a historic downtown and helping grow the local economy," said Arcuri. "This grant will help downtown Cortland grow and expand while maintaining its cultural heritage. Congratulations to the Cortland Downtown Partnership and to everyone who worked so hard to make this grant a reality. These projects represent everything we should be doing to develop our downtowns and our cities. I will continue to work with Cortland and communities throughout the 24th district to harness federal resources for local development."

These federal funds will be matched by the City of Cortland, which received Preserve America status last year. This is the first year the city has received funding through the Preserve America Program. Over the last 14 months Cortland Downtown Partnership has received \$750,000 in federal state, and private funding for culture, commerce, and community development in Cortland.

The grant will fund a series of studies of the historic properties in downtown Cortland to assess their potential for housing commercial, artistic, and cultural activities. These projects include:

- A partnership with SUNY Cortland to create a 3-D model of Downtown Cortland for marketing and planning;
- An analysis and estimation of demand for arts, culture, and housing building space in the Historic area; and
- Architectural and engineering studies regarding the cost of building upgrades.

"It is exciting to see SUNY Cortland, City Hall and the Downtown Partnership collaborating on this project," said Lloyd Purdy, Executive Director for Cortland Downtown Partnership. "I want to thank Congressman Arcuri for the strong letter of support he sent on our behalf. I know that his support for this program and for development in Cortland went a long way to secure this grant."

These projects are designed to dovetail on Cortland County's work developing the Tioughnioga River trail. Historic Downtown Cortland will anchor the trail and expand economic opportunities for businesses.

The grant was presented by Preserve America and the Congressional Historic Preservation caucus at a Congressional reception featuring Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady of the United States, in Washington today. Lloyd Purdy from Cortland attended the reception on behalf of Downtown Cortland's Heritage and Culture District and met with Arcuri.

The 2007 federal budget contains approximately \$5 million for grants to support community efforts to demonstrate sustainable uses of the historic and cultural sites and the economic and educational opportunities related to heritage tourism.

The Preserve America grant program helps local communities develop sustainable resource management strategies and sound business practices for the continued preservation and use of heritage assets. State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, designated Preserve America Communities, and Certified Local Governments that have applied for Preserve America Community designation are eligible to apply for Preserve America Grants. A total of 68 grants were awarded in 2006, the first year of the program.

Purdy also discussed other downtown development issues for Cortland and other Upstate communities with Arcuri. He touched on historic preservation, economic development, campus-downtown collaboration, and infrastructure upgrades.

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